

Automotive Taxes Reach A New High Figure in Past Year

Most Families Now on Wheels But Not Certain How Long Ownership Will Last

North Carolina motorists, farmers, truckers and other motor vehicle owners paid in 1941 a record-breaking total of \$40,385,000 in automotive taxes to the state, S. Giffner Sparger, Secretary, North Carolina Petroleum Industries Committee, Raleigh, said recently in reviewing the remarkable expansion of automobile ownership and use in this State. Of the total automotive tax revenue, an estimated \$31,266,000 was derived from gasoline taxes, and an estimated \$9,119,000 from registration and other fees.

"It almost is unbelievable, but the State of North Carolina in 1941 received in revenue from automotive taxes an amount exceeding its total annual tax revenue from all sources less than two decades ago. In other words, car owners are now paying to the state more money than everybody used to pay in taxes to the state just a few years ago. In 1923 the State's total revenue was \$16,187,859, as compared to the estimated \$40,385,000 tax bill of the motorists for 1941."

Registrations of automobiles and trucks in the state increased by 11 per cent in 1941, according to estimates from preliminary figures, and at the close of 1941 an all-time high number of motor vehicles were operating on the highways of this state. More than half of all the families in the state now own automobiles.

A substantial part of the increased registrations of motor vehicles took place among families with incomes in the neighborhood of \$30 a week or less, continued Mr. Sparger, adding that now approximately half of all the cars on the highways of this State are owned by families in the lower income brackets.

"Expansion of automobile ownership during recent years has been chiefly downward through the low-income families," said Mr. Sparger. "During the past decade the life expectancy of an automobile has increased from eight to twelve years. That means the average car made today has years of added usefulness that are available to families who can afford to buy only second, third or fourth hand cars. This has brought modern magic carpets, battered and dented somewhat but still serviceable, to the masses. The result is that in the United States there are more low-income families owning cars than there are car-owning families, rich and poor, in all the rest of the world."

"Recent studies of car ownership in this state reveal not only that about half of the cars are owned by families with modest incomes, but also that more used cars are sold than new cars. After the original owner, an automobile often passes to the possession of three or more families before it is finally retired to the junk heap."

"This remarkable trend of increasing ownership of older cars among the low income families in this state has almost escaped notice. Yet studies indicate that approximately half of the cars operating on the highways of North Carolina are five or more years old and that these cars have an average cash value of less than \$150.00."

Not only did the number of automobiles increase in 1941, but owners of all cars tended to use their vehicles more. Preliminary figures for the year, said Mr. Sparger, indicate that motor vehicle owners used 19 per cent more gasoline in 1941 than they did in the previous year. A substantial part of that gain in consumption was from the increase in automobile registrations, and the balance of the gain results from the wheels of all motor vehicles on the highways generally moving more than in 1940. During the past five

(Continued on page four)

Red Cross Sewing Room Ships Goods

Completing its first sewing quota, the Martin County Red Cross Chapter production unit today shipped its last box of articles to the Red Cross Export Depot at Jersey City.

Reviewing the activities of the production center in the Woman's Club hall here, Mrs. A. R. Dunning, chairman, stated that the following articles had been made and shipped for use in the war-torn areas: 66 sweaters, 25 shawls, 10 pairs of socks, 45 mufflers, 12 caps or beanies, 24 bed shirts, 50 girls' skirts, 13 boys' shirts, 15 convalescent robes, 10 hospital pajamas, 14 women's dresses, 20 layettes and a number of hoods. Expressing her great appreciation to all those who aided in preparing the articles and in meeting the first production unit quota, Mrs. Dunning stated that a second quota would be asked for soon and that she sincerely hoped that every one will assist in the work. "If you cannot come to the sewing room, you can sew at home," Mrs. Dunning said, adding that everyone is busy, but that this is our war and that we dare not fail to do our part.

Dr. Chas. Lenard Will Head Missionary Work In War Area

Dr. Charles A. Leonard, who for many years was Baptist missionary to Manchuria and for the last year has been a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands, last week attended a meeting of the administrative committee in Richmond, and was delegated to go to Honolulu to carry out the plans of this committee in regard to the missionary work to be done there.

The administrative committee appropriated \$25,000 to be used to aid the missionaries to carry out their work under war conditions. This money is to be spent immediately and another \$25,000 has been appropriated to be used if necessary.

The committee is under the direction and supervision of the Foreign Missions Board. January 25th has been set aside as the day on which the churches will be asked to make

the offering for this special work. The board has said that it is urgent that this effort be completed not later than February 15th.

Dr. Leonard will leave for Honolulu as soon as arrangements for his passage can be made. It is expected that Mrs. Leonard will accompany Dr. Leonard to Honolulu. If passage cannot be arranged for on a plane, the Leonards will possibly go by a transport.

In addition to its immediate work, the War Emergency Council, created by the Board last week, is calling upon the Southern Baptists for a \$200,000 emergency relief fund. The call will be issued the 25th of this month. It is understood that the Mission Board has been requested to transfer \$10,000 set aside for work in Japan to the Hawaiian mission for emergency service in the islands.

Horizontal Increase In Tobacco Acreages

ALIVE AND WELL

Reported lost in action in the Pacific on December 7th, Austin Randolph Jackson is still alive according to a message received by his mother, Mrs. Ora Jackson Burnett, in Jamestown late yesterday afternoon. Coming from Honolulu, the message offered few details but stated that a letter will follow.

While the message came too late for a Christmas present, the young man's mother was overjoyed to hear the news reached her so unexpectedly yesterday afternoon.

Radical Upsets Are Expected to Follow Rationing System

No Mumbling or Grumbling Expected and Little Will Be Tolerated

There'll be little or no mumbling and grumbling about it, but radical upsets in our more-or-less luxury plans are almost certain to follow the rationing systems, the first of which goes into effect next Monday. Where filling stations and dealers once sold five tires they will be allowed to sell only one in the future, and the purchaser must show a mighty good reason why he should have the tire. Tin will be rationed after the same fashion, and it is quite possible that the old cypress shingle, at one time a main source of income along the banks of the old Roanoke, may come back into style even in the fire districts.

These and other items will be on the rationing list, but the effect of the new system is interesting to anticipate.

It is possible that some jobs will have to be surrendered, because when their tires are worn out and they can't drive their cars to work those employees living a block or two from their work will have to resign. It has been suggested, jokingly possibly, that some of Williamston's lawyers will set up their offices right in their homes and reduce the number of court terms to save steps and from the courthouse.

Talk of gasoline rationing a while back was followed by a marked trend of self-locomotive vehicles, mainly the bicycle. Now, with the rationing of tires it is possible that the trend will turn toward sleds or vehicles equipped with ovals sawed from gum logs.

While the rationing system may become serious it is not so serious at the present time. An automobile dealer says he could possibly sell ten new cars today, but if he had more

(Continued on page four)

Record Sale Of Car License Tags

What is believed to be a record in automobile license tags was reported by the local bureau of the Carolina Motor Club in the offices of the Chamber of Commerce on Washington Street here today. Rushed during several days this week, the bureau had sold up until early today 3,720 car tags, 575 truck plates and 450 tags for trailers. Only a few—27—tags had been sold for farmers' trucks. Bureau Manager R. H. Smith stated that farmers were not very much interested in the "cut-rate" tags when they learned that special affidavits had to be signed and other details handled before the particular type of plates could be had. According to highway patrolmen not a single motorist has been arrested in this immediate territory for operating cars carrying old tags.

Official Notice Of Ten Percent Boost In Crop Is Awaited

Advisability of Increasing 1942 Production Doubtful in Some Quarters

Flue-cured tobacco acreages will be increased ten per cent for 1942, according to unofficial information received here this week. The announcement, traced to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, comes somewhat as a surprise after numbers of farm leaders had taken steps to have penalties increased in an effort to hold the new crop to the 1941 figure. The advisability of increasing the acreage this year is doubted in some quarters, and it has been suggested that the increase comes only after pressure had been brought by some "forces" for a larger production.

Falling out of a clear sky, the proposed increase in tobacco acreages will, it is firmly believed by some, directly conflict with the "food for freedom" program. However, it has been pointed out, that tobacco may possibly be preferred over food and raiment. The announcement also comes close behind reports showing large inventories in dealers' and manufacturers' hands.

Up until a short time ago huge stocks destined for transport were said to have been piling up in Atlantic storage houses. Apparently those stocks are moving because the anticipated increase in domestic consumption will hardly offset the loss of foreign markets.

The report from Washington announcing the proposed acreage boost stated that the increase was being planned to meet a record demand for cigarette tobacco and to maintain normal reserves.

The national marketing quota for this type of tobacco was raised from 618,000,000 pounds as established in October to 679,800,000 pounds. The 1942 planting allotment was increased from 762,000 acres to 842,500 acres.

The department said that since establishment of the national quota in October, the demand for cigarettes had increased more than had been anticipated. For the last half of this year the consumption of cigarettes, the outlet for four-fifths of the flue-

(Continued on page four)

Men Over 28 Years To Be Reclassified

In accordance with instructions received here, the Martin County Draft Board will meet next Monday to reclassify all men who were deferred on account of age limits. The order affects those men between 28 and 35 years of age, inclusive. It is understood that all those men in the above age group who were previously deferred on account of their "advanced" ages will be made subject to call according to their respective order numbers.

According to a review of the classifications released some time ago, there are not very many men in the age group who will be subject to immediate call since most of the group were deferred for other reasons.

Secrecy surrounds most of the draft board activities these days, but it was learned that the draft machinery is being speeded up to a fairly fast pace. It is also understood that men heretofore deferred on account of illiteracy will be made subject to call. This order, if it is with foundation, will likely make a large number available for service subject only to examination by the Army personnel. Heretofore many men have been deferred in this county because they had had only limited educational training.

REMEMBRANCES

By CHAS. SMALLWOOD
Williamston, N. C.
DURING 1870's and '80's

This time it was Williamston's wharf which had concluded to go into smoke. The wharf, the freight house, and all that was in it. But few folk got to this fire, it being a mile away from the town proper, and likely all had burned before anyone got there. But another wharf was built, and the "landing," once Williamston's first point of contact with the world beyond, still holds existence above the roaring river, the waters of which still loan passage to boats of burden, which vie with their competitors, the railroads, the truck roads, and now the air-roads. Just as the ox of old, still occasionally finds its job to do, in spite of the mighty caterpillar of steel, which lays its own bridge through muck and mire.

Speller's Ferry across the Roanoke was the one and important connection between Williamston and far away Windsor, ten miles over the swamp, and the counties to the northwest. It was an all-day trip via Speller's Ferry from Williamston to Windsor and back; and hardly anyone had business beyond this.

In those days, people whose lands touched the river, used their swamps as hog-runs. Each farmer went to and fed his drove once a day, usually between day-break and sunrise. Each drove learned its owner's call, and none but his drove came to his call. It was said that many a hog-caller on one side the swamp, heard and learned the calls of the callers on the other side of the swamp, but the density of which prevented each from ever meeting or even seeing the other through a life-time of calls. Which verifies the old adage, "so near and yet so far."

River-life on the Roanoke, and in its vast swampy floodlands called "islands", was momentous of old Williamston. (Continued on page four)

Regional Library Association Ends Its First Half Year

Tri-County Service Circulates Nearly 8,000 Books During the Period

The Regional Library Association, consisting of Beaufort, Hyde and Martin Counties, has completed six months of service, during which the Bookmobile has made three complete rounds, traveled 2806 miles, registered 564 borrowers and circulated 7599 books. The region has spent \$1334.90 for books, \$1160.59 for bookmobile, salary, office equipment, insurance and so forth. This splendid beginning could not have been made had it not been for the generous aid furnished by the Washington public library which gave it a home, and the WPA who have furnished the drivers and clerks (six in all) along with the counsel and support of the library directors.

Miss Elizabeth House, the regional librarian, has been untiring in her efforts to make books available in every section and cross-roads of the participating counties.

Recently, Miss Amis, director of WPA library work in North Carolina, made a tour of our area. Finding our work in such a healthy state, she recommended upon her return to Raleigh that our area receive two thousand volumes from the WPA library service to supplement our own collection in addition to four hundred volumes already advanced. In addition, Miss Marjorie Beat, director of the North Carolina Library Commission, is purchasing a \$150 collection of children's books which will be made available in our area as soon as they arrive.

With a constantly growing collection of books the second half of the first year of our unit bids fair to make the whole year of cooperative enterprise one of genuine progress and service.

The library board solicits the continued understanding and cooperation of books the second half of the only in this way can the service be enlarged and improved. With this unity of effort good books can become the means of relaxation and enlightenment during these troubled days before us.

HOG KILLING

While possibly worried over the war and the more or less common drawbacks common to the individual, Martin County farmers are not worrying over their food supply for the current year. Hog killings are underway on a very large scale at the present time, and up until the unusually warm weather during the past 24 hours it was about as common a sight to see large numbers of hogs hanging on the racks as it was to see the weekly wash on the lines in the rural communities.

The meat supply while no larger possibly than it was last year, is more than ample to care for local needs.

Rainfall Last Year Reached A New Low Point In This County

Despite a near-record fall last month, the year just ended goes down in history as the driest on record in Martin County. Weeks and weeks came and went without a cloud making its appearance, and while some feared the river was going to dry up it was almost generally agreed that the dust bowl was moving from the West.

While the war was admittedly serious, the dry season was also admittedly serious, but despite the dry weather bumper crops were produced and the section enjoyed an unusually prosperous season. Farmers, their wells depleted, experienced much trouble hauling water for their stock and home consumption, and small grain crops were possible only on a rather small scale. Between the war and the dry weather, there was much to talk about. Exhausting the war topics, the populace would turn to the weather. Both were timely discussions topics, and while the war was far more serious, the weather came in for at least half the talk.

The precipitation for the year was recorded at 31.76 inches or a little over sixteen inches below the average rainfall for the previous ten-year period and almost five inches below the previous low of 36.60 inches recorded for the year 1933.

The rainfall last year was 23.65 inches below the record of 55.41 inches recorded for the year 1936.

With one exception—4.94 inches in June—the 4.54 inches of rainfall last month was the largest recorded during the past eleven years follows:

1931—48.00 inches; 1932—44.91 inches; 1933—36.60 inches; 1934—52.18 inches; 1935—49.99 inches; 1936—55.41 inches; 1937—43.62 inches; 1938—53.70 inches; 1939—55.48 inches; 1940—37.89 inches, and 1941—31.76 inches.

Judge R. L. Coburn Working Over Time In Recorder's Court

Calls Thirteen Cases in Long Session Held Last Monday

Since occupying the recorder's bench in the county a short time ago, Judge R. L. Coburn has been working over time to keep the docket up to date. Last Monday with Assistant Solicitor Wheeler Martin prosecuting the docket, Judge Coburn called thirteen cases and held the trial in session until well after the lunch hour before clearing the docket. Even then the session was short and the number of cases small for a post-Christmas period.

Cases called in the court follow:

Charged with disorderly conduct, Walter Wallace Bailey was sentenced to the roads for a period of sixty days. Bailey had been in the court only two weeks previously on a charge of reckless driving. At that time he was sentenced to the roads for a period of sixty days, the court having suspended the sentence upon guaranteed good behavior. Advised he had broken the trust, the court invoked the old sentence.

Ernest Lee pleaded guilty in the case charging him with reckless driving, and was sentenced to the roads for a period of thirty days. The court suspended the sentence upon the payment of a \$15 fine and costs of the court. The case charging Goldie Hyman with selling tenant's crop was not pressed.

Pleading guilty in the case charging him with drunken driving, Roy D. Harrell was fined \$50, taxed with the cost and had his operator's license revoked for one year.

Ernest Godard was found not guilty in the case charging him with drunken driving.

William H. Saunders was sentenced to the roads for thirty days in the case charging him with destroying personal property.

The case charging James Johnson with trespass was not pressed.

Edgar Taylor was found not guilty in the case charging him with carrying a concealed weapon.

The case charging John Bennett and Nathan Brown was not pressed. A third defendant, Richard Bennett, pleaded not guilty, the court continuing the action under prayer for judgment.

A continuance until January 5 was granted in the case charging Stanley Ayers and Robert Roberson with disorderly conduct and assaults with a deadly weapon.

Charged with an assault with a

(Continued on page four)

New Year Ushered In Quietly Here

The New Year was ushered in quietly here as compared with the noise and general celebration of a year ago. There was much noise to be sure, but the weight of war and the uncertainty 1942 holds in store seemed to check the observance marking the passing of the old and the coming of the New Year.

Little homage was paid Old Man Nineteen-Forty-One, for only an occasional firecracker was popped before the midnight strike. Regardless of the gloom accompanying 1941, the merry-makers apparently renewed their hopes and for a few minutes joyously heralded the coming of the New Year. Bells, mill whistles, firecrackers and automobile horns were heard in a ragged unison. While a year before the merry-makers wound down only after an hour or more of whooping and snorting, the celebration yesterday morning was well fagged out within ten or fifteen minutes.

Receiving a call just 23 minutes before the old year was spent, the fire department sounded its alarm to break the clear midnight air. But accompanying its sound were indirect warnings that in some future day possibly in 1942, men, women and children would be scampering to shelter right here in Williamston at the sound of the siren.

IN REVERSE

Patriotism, so willingly and extensively advanced in the purchase of savings stamps during the holiday season, is about to reverse itself, certainly in some instances. Reports from the local post office state that quite a few persons, mostly children, are surrendering their stamps for cold cash. No official report on the actual number returned could be had, but the stamps were being turned in fair-sized numbers in the small albums.

And then there was a report telling about a housewife who became angry with a grocery clerk because he would not accept the savings stamps in exchange for groceries.

Farmers Assured Of Price Floor For All Basic Crops

Extension of Farm Program To Provide Benefits For Next Five Years

Despite so-called economy drives now underway or proposed in Congress, it was virtually made certain this week that farmers will not be left out in the cold, that definite steps have already been taken by the President to continue for five more years the program that has put billions of extra dollars into agriculture's pockets. In approving the bill calling for a five-year extension of the program, President Roosevelt entered one objection. He was of the opinion that the program called for excessive loans on peanuts. However, Senators George and Russell, both of Georgia, who sponsored the peanut provision, said this difference between the administration and Congress could be worked out without serious difficulty.

"The President's signature virtually assures farmers a floor under the basic crops during the wartime emergency," Senator Russell said.

Other farm-minded legislators pointed out that farmers had collected about \$3,000,000,000 in soil conservation payments during the past six years, an average of amount \$500,000,000 annually, while the price-supporting loans had increased market prices received for cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco and rice during the past year.

Authority for both the payment and mandatory loan programs was scheduled to expire on December 31, and the measure signed by the President extended these until January 1, 1947.

Congress must vote funds for future benefit payments later, but Senator Russell said that mandatory loan program continued automatically. Under this, the Commodity Credit Corporation is directed to make loans at 85 per cent of the parity price.

Russell pointed out that the government loan agency could call upon the Treasury for any deficiency in its loan funds, so that price-supporting loans were automatic.

President Roosevelt, in a brief

(Continued on page four)

County Schools To Reopen On Monday

Enjoying a full two-weeks for the Christmas holidays, the several thousand white children in this county will return to school next Monday morning, the office of the superintendent stating this morning that activities will be advanced on regular schedules. Losing some time during the early part of the term, all colored schools in the county have already reopened.

School authorities are looking for a normal attendance when the plants reopen, the superintendent stating that he saw no reason why every child should not be back in his seat next Monday morning.

No estimate on the number of families moving into and out of the several districts could be had today.

Manila Falls Into The Hands of Japs At 10 O'Clock Today

Important Statement Eagerly Awaited from White House Late This Afternoon

Angry hordes pouring out of Japan swept down the island of Luzon and occupied the city of Manila in the Philippines at 10 o'clock this morning to accomplish what military authorities had expected for days. The important naval base of Cavite was evacuated, a terse report stating that American forces had withdrawn from the base, taking much equipment and destroying the remainder. American wounded men were removed to safety.

While the loss of Manila is a serious blow, its fall does not necessarily mean that the fighting is over on Luzon island. General Douglas MacArthur and his men, taking up new positions, are still offering a stubborn fight against the invaders. "The fall of Manila, while serious, has not lessened defense of other positions," a late report stated.

While Manila was falling into the hands of the ravishing Japanese hordes, the Japs were effecting landings on other islands, including points on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula.

The serious situation in the Philippines is apparently approaching the critical stage rapidly.

While news from the Philippines is terribly disheartening, encouraging reports are coming out of Burma where General Wavell is heading up a large army with the possibility that relief will soon be made possible for hard-pressed Malaya.

Commentators, discussing the situation in the far Pacific, are of the opinion that General MacArthur will continue to offer a strong opposition in the Philippines as long as possible, giving the combined forces of the United States, Britain and the Dutch East Indies more time to prepare for a big battle for Singapore. Some of the observers believe General MacArthur will engage the yellow Japs for quite a while.

In the Battle of Singapore, the United States will be expected to throw its naval power into action. The Dutch have a large air force, and the British are expected to furnish the manpower. A tough struggle is anticipated, the reports stating that Japan, regardless of losses, is employing tactics similar to those used by the Germans.

Important and big news is eagerly anticipated from the White House late this afternoon. The nature of the anticipated statement was not disclosed, but it is highly probable that it will center around the Allied War Council. It is also probable that the statement in addition to announcing the progress of the supreme war council will also declare that no separate peace will be considered until Hitler and the contemptible, low-down yellow Japs are destroyed or whipped to the last frazzle.

Russia continues on the heels of fleeing Germans on the eastern front, a late report stating that the invaders have been driven back to within 95 miles of Smolensk, where the Nazis will probably offer to make a determined stand. Dozens of German divisions have been destroyed in the retreat, and the Russian situation looks most encouraging.

In Libya, the strong Axis base of Bardia has been captured, the action freeing more than 1,000 British prisoners and leaving the Germans and Italians only a few scattered forces to offer opposition.

Board To Ration Tires In County

The seriousness of the war situation was brought home to business today when automobile sales were frozen and air-tight rationing plans for automobile tires were outlined for rationing boards in a meeting at Windsor at noon today.

Two of the boards named in this county were eliminated, George W. Jeffries, leading the discussion at the Windsor meeting, stating that since there won't be but eighteen tires available for automobile owners in Martin County this month it would be useless to have more than one board. Messrs. J. A. Everett, H. L. Roebuck and C. C. Martin will handle the rationing work in this county and they will meet from time to time to consider applications for tires. It is understood the board will hold its first meeting next Monday.

Ordinary car owners cannot buy tires, it is understood, and when the allotment is exhausted no one can buy tires. Preference is given to doctors, ambulance owners, police, sanitary and public health forces, mail carriers, passenger and school buses and farmers' trucks.

More details on the rationing system will be made public as soon as possible, but for the present the situation can be regarded as extremely serious.

Messrs. S. C. Griffin, A. J. Manning, R. L. Perry, Allen Osborne, Charles R. Gray, Cartwright Taylor, J. A. Everett, H. L. Roebuck and C. C. Martin represented this county at the meeting.